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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the administrative theory and its application in the community college organization. It identifies four assumptions regarding administration: (1) administration is an integrated part of all human life; (2) administration is the process of directing and controlling life in a social organization; (3) the specific function of administration is to develop and regulate the decision-making process in the most effective manner possible; and (4) administrators work with groups or individuals with a group referent, not with individuals as such. The paper argues that administrators regard individuals as members of a group, e.g., a faculty member is a member of a group of instructors rather than an individual. It goes on to present the three elements of the competency concept: (1) Job--critical task; (2) Theory--method of performing critical task; and (3) Know-How--operational beliefs, skills, and knowledge needed to perform task. The paper also discusses the dependency concept designed by Chris Argyris and E. Wight Bakke. According to this theory, in order to create a unified, self-maintaining work group, the members of the group must be placed in a dependent relationship to the organizational leader. Finally, since the individual cannot fulfill his or her needs or goals without the organization, and the organization exists to fulfill its own needs and goals, a fusion of the two is necessary. (NB)

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*The Administrative Theory and its Application to
Decision Making in the Community College*

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Abstract

The administrative theory and its application to the decision making process was investigated. This research was to discover how the administration theory along with the assumptions derived from it affected many of the decision making in the community college administration, faculty and staff and other personnel. It will be discovered that the administrations primary concern with the decision making process are the decisions which hinder the effective and efficient operation of the community college organization.

The Administrative Theory

The Administrative Theory and its Application to Decision Making in the Community college

Herbert Feigl defines theory as a set of assumptions from which a set of empirical laws may be derived. This definition is the accepted standard which is used by researches and theoreticians (Feigl, 1951). The theory I am referring to here is the theory of administration. The first assumption regarding administration is that administration is an integral part of all human life. A logical deduction from this assumption is that the varieties of administration are more alike than different. The second assumption is that administration is the process of directing and controlling life in a social organization. This assumption means that administration is the implementation of the purposes for which an organization is designed through such procedures as establishing criteria for the performance of individuals as they live in the organization and establishing controls to make certain that performance agrees with plans. Administration is not an artificial function superimposed on the normal activities of human beings, it is rather the process (cycle of events) engaged in by the members of a social organization in order to control and direct the activities of the members within the organization. Administration occurs whenever the life processes of an organization are being controlled (Feigl, 1951). In contrast to this, it can be said that administration is not the production of the organization. Chester Barnard indicated this quite clearly when he said, "Executive work is not that of the

organization, but the specialized work of maintaining the organization in operation" (Barnard, 1938). This leads into the third assumption, which is that the specific function of administration is to develop and regulate the decision making process in the most effective manner possible. It is sometimes assumed that the function of the chief executive officer is to make decisions generally by him self because others are incompetent. This is not the basic assumption of this theory; rather it is the assumption that it is the function of the executive to see to it that the decision process proceeds in an effective manner (an effective manner is one which results in the accomplishment of stated objectives). In fact, the executive is called upon to make decisions only when the organization fails to make its own decisions. To put this into other words, if the executive is personally making decisions this means that there exists a malfunctioning in the decision making process. The executive needs to correct the malfunction. Barnard was referring to this point when he said "It is the organization, not the executive, which does the work on the external environment. The executive is primarily concerned with decision which facilitate or hinder the effective and efficient operation of the organization" (Barnard, 1938; p. 215).

The entire administrative functions, decision process and structure of many organizations can be seen up close in the community college organizational structure. The chief administration of the community college is the community college board. The board usually consist of from five to nine members elected from the district at large for four year terms. They may meet once or twice a month or, in some cases weekly. Their responsibilities include selecting, evaluating and dismissing the president, ensuring professional management of the institution; purchasing,

constructing, and maintaining facilities; defining the role and mission of the college; engaging in public relation, approving programs; determining staff salaries; and contracting for services. The boards are public corporations, they are legally responsible for all college affairs (Blocker, Plummer and Richardson, 1965).

The president reports to the community college board. The business manager and the director of community relations report to the president. Underneath the president on the organizational chart is a dean of liberal arts and sciences, a dean of technological science, a dean of students for vocational education, and a dean of continuing education. Under the deans are department division chairs and guidance personnel, and under them are the faculty.

Each administrator from the college board to the department chair are responsible for making decisions related to their own facility. A decision may be rejected if it hinders the effective and efficient operation of the organization as a whole or in part.

This entire process eliminates one administrator making all decisions for the entire college. Administration is an ongoing perpetual process that keeps the college operating. The myth about the president of a community college making all decisions is not true. Primarily, the president carries out general administrative duties and has periodic meetings with the board and with heads of state agencies. To a lesser extent, the president makes decisions on faculty recruitment and coordinates the college program with programs of other institutions and community groups (Vaughan, 1994). This leads us into the fourth assumption which is that administrators work with groups or with individuals with a group referent, not with individuals as such; and

administrators interacts with others in the organization primarily in terms of the group to which others belong. The college administrators perception of Z is of a member of a group (administrators; faculty, staff, students, etc.), rather than Z as a unique individual. Subordinates rebel against this perception of the administrator and the rebellion has taken the form of strong unions in industry and the strengthening of teachers' organization in education. The interesting point is that the worker joins the union to develop " self " but rather quickly finds that he is perceived the same way in the union as he is in industry. This no doubt, is one of the major reasons why unions are now having the same organizational problems that management is having.

The administrator perceives others in the same way; for instance, he regards faculty of the community college as a member of the faculty rather than as individuals. Officers of college police change each year; yet the perception of the officers remain much the same from year to year. In other words, administrators are oriented to groups, not individuals.

In order to work with the assumption stated above, it is necessary to have a set of working concepts. The concepts must be relevant to the theory, must be stated clearly, must be used wherever the same idea is being discussed, and must be operational. Their meaning must correspond to empirically observable facts or situations. The concepts actually provide the building blocks of the theory, and the theory can be no stronger than its concepts (Barnard, 1938).

In my opinion the best concept for school administration is the competency concept. Several of the Cooperative Programs in Educational Administration Centers devoted

considerable effort to the development of theoretical approaches to educational administration. One of these was the Southern States Center at George Peabody College where Professor Orin Graff had the greatest influence in shaping the direction the inquiry. The central theme of this approach is called the competency concept and was originally published in a volume entitled, Better Teaching in School Administration (1955).

The authors believe that competency in educational administration results when an "individual exhibits behavior that enables him to perform a particular administrative task in the most desirable manner." It can be readily seen that the competency concept emphasizes values or what ought to be. This is the most distinguishing factor of this approach, and the authors state this quite clearly. It was also recognized that in many instances the designation of a task and the choice of a method of performing it depended upon a value base which an individual might possess. Of course, the performance of any tasks invariably necessitated exercising particular skills, abilities, and understandings which an individual had to possess. It was recognized that the value base which penetrated an individual's behavior was actually a theory of educational administration. Thus, we have a definition of theory which is the direct opposite of what has been the accepted definition in all other areas of the physical and social sciences. This definition was followed closely, and the resulting design of the inquiry was inevitable. The best way to present the competency concept is to illustrate its three element; Job, Theory, and Know-How.

<i>Job:</i>	<i>Critical Task; Initiating and maintaining a system of student accounting and attendance.</i>
<i>Theory:</i>	<i>Method of performing critical task (an operational expression of theory); In initiating and maintaining a system of student accounting and attendance, administration should establish and operate a continuing school census. Determine the geographical distribution of students and predict geographical shifts in population of students. Provide for recording all professional staff procedures for dealing with attendance and enrollment problems. Analyze and interpret age grade distribution in terms of educational needs.</i>
<i>Know-How:</i>	<i>Operational beliefs, skills, knowledge needed to perform the task; initiating and maintaining a system of student accounting and attendance. An administrator needs the following; Operational belief; all projections concerning educational programs and facilities should be based upon factual information concerning</i>

students to be educated. All students have a right to receive education at public expense. Knowledge and information: knowledge of the kinds of forms needed to collect essential data concerning student attendance, of official records from which vital statistics can be obtained, of efficient record keeping of various age grade distributions and of attendance laws and regulations; Technical skills; Skill in procedures for collecting essential data on student attendance. Interpreting and recording student data, in projecting and estimating future demands upon the community college system, in organizing people to collect needed data about student attendance (Southern State Cooperative Program, 1955).

Now there is another concept called the dependency concept designed by Chris Argyris and E. Wight Bakke. For a number of years a theory of behavior in formal organizations has been evolving at the Yale Labor Management Center. The basic reference used here is Executive Leadership (1933) by Chris Argyris and Bonds of Organization (1950) by E. Wight Bakke. A set of assumptions is first stated, and from these assumptions a set of organizational processes is derived. The most important assumption is that the developmental processes and goals of the individual and his

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organization are at crucial points, fundamentally different and antagonistic. The processes derived for the hypotheses are;

1. *Workflow Process; The exact behavior required by the purposes of the organization.*
2. *Reward and Penalty; To be applied to people in the organization.*
3. *Authority Process; To coordinate, control and direct the people in the organization (agents), to compel attention to the organization relevant to the personal needs of the agents, and to maintain a constant vigil over the fusion process between the agents and their jobs.*
4. *Perpetuation Process; To keep the organization going.*
5. *Identification Process; To help individuals identify with the organization.*
6. *Communication Process; To provide ways, media, and paths for communication among the agents.*
7. *Status Process; to rank agents, materials, and ideas in terms of their importance or prestige (Argyris, 1933, Bakke, 1950).*

The fusion process is emphasized in the work of the Yale Center. Since the individual lives to fulfill his needs and achieve his or her goals and cannot do this without the organization, and the organization exist to fulfill its needs and achieve its goals, a fusion of the two (individual and organization) is necessary. The fusion process is said to occur when the "individual obtains the

maximal expression of his or her personality that is possible, and simultaneously, the organization has its demands fulfilled at the highest possible level".

Growing out of the above frame of reference and the data in his study, Executive Leadership, Argyris (1933) postulates the dependency concept of organizational leadership. He points out that if a unified, self maintaining work group is to be created the members of the group are placed in a dependency relationship to the organizational leader. This comes about because a work group is concerned only with the work flow process; in order to incorporate his work group into the formal organization, the leader supplies the missing processes, such as authority, rewards and penalties, and communications (Argyris, 1933).

In regards to the community college organization the fusion process is brought about by some basic principles of the formal organization structure. Administrators and faculty each specialize in their particular task. In specialization of their task, the emphasis is upon power, conformity to and loyalty for the college goals and objectives. These emphasis are embodied in four principles or assumptions of the scientific management theories. Briefly these assumptions are stated as follows;

- 1. Task (work) specialization. If concentrating effort on a limited field of endeavor increases the quality and quantity of output, institution and*

Administrative efficiency is increased by specialization of tasks of faculty and administrators of the institution.

2. *Chain of command.* The principle of task specialization creates a plurality of parts, each performing a specialized task. However, a plurality of parts performing their specialization does not form a college organizational institution. A pattern of parts must be formed so that the interrelationship among parts create the organization. Following the logic of specialization the planners create a new function (leadership) whose primary responsibility shall be the control, direction, and coordination of the interrelationships of the parts and to make certain that each part performs its goal and objectives adequately. Thus, the assumption is made that administrative and organizational efficiency is increased by arranging the parts in a determinate hierarchy of authority where the part on top can direct and control the part on the bottom. If the parts being considered are individuals, then they must be motivated to accept direction, control, and coordination of their behavior. The leader is therefore assigned formal power to hire, discharge, reward, and penalize the individuals in order that their behavior be molded toward the organization's objectives.
3. *Unity of Direction.* If the tasks of every person in a unit are specialized, the objective or purpose of the unit must be specialized. The principle of unity has a single activity (or homogeneous set of activities) that is planned and directed by the leader.

4. *Span of Control*. The principle of control states that administration efficiency is increased by limiting the span of control of a leader to no more than five or six subordinates whose work interlocks (Vaughan, 1994).

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